



California Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of Californians

March 23, 2015

TO: Members of the California Congressional Delegation

VOTE YES ON H.R. 1470: MEDICARE SGR PAYMENT REFORM & CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

The California Medical Association strongly urges Members of the California Congressional Delegation to vote YES on H.R. 1470, the Medicare SGR Payment Reform and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) extension when it comes up for a vote on the House floor, Wednesday, March 25.

H.R. 1470 and its funding package are a rare, unprecedented display of bipartisanship on the SGR. After more than a decade of kicking the can on the SGR, this is truly a historic moment. This legislation will substantially improve access to care for the 5 million California seniors and disabled patients, nearly 1 million military families on TriCare, and nearly half a million uninsured children.

The legislation provides meaningful payment reform and stable updates so physicians can plan for the long term. It replaces the burdensome reporting programs with a simplified, consolidated incentive payment system and allows a 5% incentive payment for physicians who want to participate in innovative alternative models. Most important, it ends the flawed SGR. It is fiscally responsible and long overdue.

The legislation also continues the important, expiring Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that provides insurance coverage to half a million uninsured California children. It's an investment in California's future.

California desperately needs reform to improve access to physicians. There are only 19 California physicians for every 1,000 Medicare patients – one of the lowest ratios in the nation. There are more than 1,000 new Medicare enrollees every single day in California, yet there are entire communities where no physician can afford to accept NEW Medicare patients. Other physicians are sadly pulling out of Medicare altogether. More than half of California physicians are over the age of 55. If we are not given some stability, we will retire and the access crisis will grow for ALL Californians.

Opinion Leaders say:

LA Times: *"The proposed reform is a rare example of a truly bipartisan effort to improve Medicare and lawmakers can't afford to pass it up."*

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: *"The compromise to fix the Medicare payment formula & extend Children's Health Insurance deserves support."*

Wall Street Journal: *"(Some) are deluding themselves and fooling voters if they think retaining the SGR status quo is fiscal responsibility."*

Americans for Tax Reform: *"There's a good conservative case to be made that SGR needs to go, and as soon as possible."*

The physicians of California thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Luther F. Cobb, MD
President